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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 000010

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: A/S FRAZER IN MAPUTO: MESSAGE ZIMBABWE DELIVERED

REF: MAPUTO 1248

Classified By: CHARGE TODD CHAPMAN FOR REASONS 1.4 (B AND D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In December 18 meetings with President Guebuza and Foreign Minister Baloi, Assistant Secretary Frazer pressed the Government of Mozambique (GRM) to take stronger action on Zimbabwe, delivering tough messages about the need for regime change in Zimbabwe, particularly in light of the growing humanitarian crisis and the potential for regional instability. The President and Foreign Minister outlined their continuing efforts at quiet diplomacy via the SADC Troika and direct bilateral ties with Zimbabwe, but disagreed that Mugabe resigning was the appropriate next step. President Guebuza showed little interest in straying from the SADC/South Africa stance on the Mugabe regime; however, continued international pressure may result in more direct private conversations between Guebuza and Mugabe in the coming days. END SUMMARY.

A/S FRAZER MEETS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BALOI...

¶2. (C) Frazer told Baloi that the situation in Zimbabwe was only getting worse, and that U.S. policy towards Zimbabwe had changed because President Mugabe was not acting in the spirit of power sharing, and had reneged on several issues such as reappointing the Central Bank Governor and the division of powerful ministries. Frazer further explained that U.S. policymakers have come to the conclusion that the central issue was a systemic problem related to succession in ZANU-PF, that power sharing with Mugabe in place is not realistic, and that one viable solution is a constitutional transfer of power under Article 18 of the Zimbabwean constitution which would pass power from Mugabe to the Vice President for a period of 90 days at which point the House of Assembly and Senate, sitting as an electoral college, would elect the new president. Frazer continued that only in such a scenario would the United States assist with a financial and economic recovery package, pointing out that Zimbabwe has now become virtually a failed state, but could be rescued before total collapse. Frazer called on the GRM to be responsible and take action on Zimbabwe.

¶3. (C) Baloi pointed out that removing Mugabe does not remove the system of behind-the-scenes ZANU-PF decision makers who are equally responsible for the country's collapse, and suggested that MDC-T is also partially to blame for deadlock on power sharing. Baloi pointed to Tsvangirai's six week absence from Harare to suggest that he lacks vision and his party is weak. The Foreign Minister said that the GRM will continue to assist in "building trust" between the MDC-T and ZANU-PF, and are working hard to do so, calling for the application of Amendment 19 and action by both parties in the power sharing agreement. Baloi concluded by stating that the GRM is interested in a solution for Zimbabwe that assures

stability, and that U.S. concerns about Zimbabwe's future are deeply felt by Mozambique as well. He added that his country cannot afford to have such instability in neighboring Zimbabwe, and will convey to both parties in Zimbabwe there that they should "not play with us (Mozambique), this (situation) is really dangerous." Both Frazer and Baloi agreed that Zimbabwe cannot become much worse without devolving into complete chaos.

...AND WITH PRES GUEBUZA ON ZIMBABWE

¶4. (C) Frazer told President Guebuza that she had been asked by Secretary Rice to come to Maputo in the spirit of consultation to discuss next steps regarding our policy on Zimbabwe. Guebuza, in an engaged and open conversation, said that the situation there was deteriorating with no easy solutions. Guebuza said that in order to solve the Zimbabwe problem, true leadership was needed, in which a working Government and Parliament could act together, commenting that it was "too much" for Zimbabwe to be without a government for 9 months as it has been. Guebuza added that there are no rational decisions that could solve such an irrational situation, and explained that the challenge in his view was to get both parties to sit together and resolve their disagreements.

¶5. (C) Guebuza expressed concern about the spreading cholera epidemic and food insecurity situations. He explained that Mugabe had called him several times in recent weeks to request discrete meetings, which would take place in

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Mozambique or Harare, perhaps on December 22 or 23. Guebuza cautioned that there were other elements to consider in a scenario absent Mugabe, who was the only person who could guarantee a smooth transition to power sharing and whatever was to come afterwards. Without Mugabe ZANU-PF would fracture, and additional instability would manifest itself in Army and Police action. Guebuza said that because of this, the GRM still firmly believes that Mugabe needs to be involved in any transition to power sharing, as he remains the only authority in Zimbabwe today. Guebuza followed-up by raising his concerns about Mugabe's ability to make rational decisions, stating that he is not the same person he was two or three years ago. Guebuza concluded the meeting by reaffirming Mozambique's resolve to work towards a peaceful power sharing solution in Zimbabwe where it was possible to find common ground between ZANU-PF and MDC-T. A/S Frazer thanked Guebuza for the meeting, remarked that Mugabe creates division within ZANU-PF to prolong his rule, and said she looks forward to further consultation in Zimbabwe.

PRESS INTERESTED IN ZIMBABWE ISSUE

¶6. (U) Frazer's visit was greeted with considerable media interest from independent and state-run media, as well as international outlets, including Reuters. At a brief availability immediately following her meeting with the President, questions focused mostly on Zimbabwe, including whether the U.S. would support military intervention or the planned SADC humanitarian campaign. Zimbabwe also dominated an exclusive interview with independent SOICO (print and television) group. A/S Frazer was asked to explain the U.S. view on the future of Zimbabwe's power sharing agreement, the possibility of a diplomatic solution for Zimbabwe, and discussions within the U.N. Security Council. Closer to home, the A/S took questions on her view of democracy in Mozambique and what Mozambicans could expect from the Obama administration next year. Frazer's comments were broadcast on television and radio within hours - evidence of the very high profile of this visit and the strong public interest in developments in Zimbabwe.

COMMENT: GRM STILL UNWILLING TO CRITICIZE MUGABE PUBLICLY

¶7. (C) Despite the reality of a failed state situation, growing regional instability, refugee inflows, and a potentially devastating cholera epidemic, the GRM seems unlikely to waiver from its Zimbabwe policy in support of the implementation of the September 11 agreement, as originally drafted. President Guebuza showed little interest in straying from the SADC/South Africa stance on the Mugabe regime; however, continued international pressure may result in more direct private conversations between Guebuza and Mugabe in the coming days. Though not expressly stated, it is clear that Mozambique continues to look to South Africa for guidance on next steps in Zimbabwe.

A/S Frazer reviewed this cable.
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